(c) An annual plan, drawn from the perspective plan, indicating the programmes to be taken up in the year in question, with allocations for each component within it.

Draft for effective functioning of Panchayats

†1105. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Government have asked the States to submit a draft for effective functioning of Panchayats in the country;

(b) if so, the progress made in this regard;

(c) the names of States which have sent the said draft in this regard; and

(d) the progress made in the direction of decentralisation of administrative and financial powers to strengthen the panchayats?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir. Central Government have not asked the States to submit any draft for effective functioning of Panchayats in the country.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) The devolution of powers as envisaged in the Constitution 73rd Amendment is primarily the responsbility of State Governments. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened seven Round Table Conferences with the State Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj between July, 2004 and December, 2004. A set of 150 action points were evolved by consensus and adopted unanimously at the conclusion of the last Round Table in Jaipur in December, 2004. Consultative mechanisms have been set up by the Government of India and State Governments to follow up the Round Table Conferences which comprise a Council of State Ministers of Panchayati Raj under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister for Panchayati Raj and a Committee of Chief Secretaries of States and State Panchayati Raj Secretaries under the Chairmanship of the Union Secretary (Panchayati Raj). Seven meetings of State Secretaries of Panchayati Raj have been held between April, 2005 and September, 2006 and two meetings of the Council of State Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj held during August, 2005 and June, 2006. The NDC Empowered Sub-Committee on Devolution

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

has also been brought under the Chairpersonship of the Minister of Panchayati Raj and has since held three meetings in June, September and December, 2006.

Besides, the Union Minister has visited over 150 Gram Sabhas, Village Panchayats, Intermediate Panchayats and District Panchayats across 21 States/Union Territories and with 19 of them concluded State-specific Joint Statements of Conclusions. (The Joint Statement with Tamil Nadu is under consideration and it was decided not to proceed with Chandigarh and the Chandigarh Administration intends to incorporate all panchayats areas in the Municipality).

In addition, two mega Conferences have been held. The first conference on the 'State of Panchayats and way forward' was held from 16—18 December, 2005 in New Delhi which was attended by Research Scholars, activists, functionaries and elected representatives of Panchayats. The second conference of 'Writers and Thinkers' was held in June, 2006 to discuss all aspects of Panchayati Raj in India including the measures to strengthen Panchayati Raj and to take it forward.

Full details on all these measures will be found in the "State of the Panchayats—Mid-Term Review and Appraisal" submitted to the House in three volumes on 23 November, 2006.

Assistance for Implementing RTI Act

1106. SHRI THENNALA G. BALAKRISHNA PILLAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any State Government had approached for Central Financial Assistance for the implementation of Right to Information Act, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the break-ups of the assistance provided, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) to (c) State Governments like the Government of Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Tripura and Uttarakhand, sought Central assistance for implementation of the Right to Information Act, 2005. The Parliament has, by law, cast an obligation on the State Governments